

**California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley
Madera County Public Forum
Madera, CA – May 19, 2006**

Member Testimony

Senator Jeff Denham

- Voiced support for the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership)
- Highway 99 needs funding for repairs and to alleviate congestion
- Building a Medical Center at UC Merced will bring needed general practitioners, specialists and other sustainable jobs to the San Joaquin Valley (Valley)
- The state needs to pay its part in the 50/50 match for education
- Proactive solutions need to be developed for water storage and the potential Avian Bird Flu epidemic
- The Partnerships success requires the Valley speaking with one voice and educating California that the Valleys problems aren't just Valley problems – they are California problems

Assemblyman David Cogdill

- Voiced support the Partnership
- Encourages the Valley to take advantage of the Partnership and a Governor who is trying to fix California
- Success requires finding a common ground of all the various businesses and Valley counties and speaking with one voice – examples of common issues are responsible growth and a comprehensive water policy
- Recognize that 5% of the tax payers are the source of most state revenues
 - These taxpayers are baby boomers, they are retiring and they are leaving the state

Government Panel

Frank Bigelow – Madera County Board of Supervisors

- The Children's Hospital of Madera County is a symbol of success for Madera because it was necessary and they fought hard for it
- Cannot forget about the surrounding counties – Mariposa and Mono have an impact on the region as well
- Growth drives everything and the Valley is growing
 - If the Valley economy stays agricultural, the San Joaquin needs more water, better education and better roads
 - If the Valley economy broadens its horizon then the counties need to work in a cooperative effort
- Sustainable jobs require a better educated work force
- Creation of a medical center at UC Merced is necessary and will provide sustainable jobs

Steve Mendt – Vice Mayor – Madera

- Madera will grow 150% by 2020 and the city lacks the infrastructure to sustain that growth
- The city cannot continue to raise taxes to pay for needed infrastructure
 - Madera's average buying income is less than the states average
 - Caltrans no longer funds over spans and clover leafs with Highway 99
- Gang violence is a concern for the city
 - The city police are working with state police and the federal government to build a gang task force

Dr. Sally Frazier – Superintendent Madera County Office of Education

- Communication is the key to making improvements
- Coalition building is a great way to make a strong point
 - Central Valley Education Coalition is a good example of a successful coalition
 - It is comprised of 109 school districts and it represents the unique needs of the San Joaquin Valley
- Support vocational education
- Develop a better policy for migrant education
- The high school exit exam is important
 - Students act differently because they believe the exam matters
- Transportation is a key issue
 - Well maintained roads are essential to commuting to school
- Work with educators to promote cultural awareness

Angel Johnston – Community and Economic Specialist – City of Chowchilla

- City of Chowchilla supports the Partnership
- Chowchilla is growing fast and the City is trying to develop neighborhoods that are integrated and not separated by income
- Small cities that are growing fast need assistance with infrastructure development
 - Small cities lack the revenues to build the infrastructure fast enough

Sheriff John Anderson – Madera County

- Madera has a methamphetamine problem
- Proposition 36 is not always an effective tool
 - Serious crimes involving drug dealers are pleaded down and the dealers don't serve jail time
- Highway 99 needs a third lane
- Raise the speed limit for trucks on Interstate 5
 - This may divert truck traffic from Highway 99 to Interstate 5

Elaine Bethel-Fink – North Fork Rancheria Mono Indians

- Madera has one of the lowest per capita incomes in California
- 28% of children live in poverty
- 50% of Hispanic and Native American children live in poverty
- Madera is one of the fastest growing areas and they need sustainable jobs
- Building a casino between Madera and Chowchilla can provide sustainable jobs.

County Administrator

- “Wealth and prosperity create wealth and prosperity.”
 - When a county or area has an attractive quality or feature, it brings attention and people
 - Let the Valley share in the State’s prosperity

Business Panel

Herman Perez – Madera Chamber of Commerce

- Focus on small business because they are integral to the community
 - Small business owners are integrated and involved in the community
- Stop producing regulations that hinder the growth of cities and small businesses
- Offer big business incentives to small businesses

Stephen Rico – President Madera Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

- Latinos represent a large section of the county’s and city’s population
 - 70% - city of Madera
 - 35% - county of Madera
- The Hispanic Chamber plays many roles in the County of Madera
 - Assist local businesses
 - Help with vocational training
 - Assist Mexican tourism
 - Act as social agency for the Hispanic community
 - Helped to bring Air Mexico to the Fresno airport
- Consider funding for Highway 41
- Develop affordable housing for minorities

Julia Berry – Executive Director Madera County Farm Bureau

- Create a regional market plan for the Valley that reflects its unique qualities
- Incentive local governments with money to do good things
- 86% of Californians believe farmers and farm land are extremely important, so the state should provide money to the farmland conservatory
- The state should provide matching funds for Madera’s water banking program
- Transportation dollars are important to the area
 - The San Joaquin Valley hosts the states two major arteries
- The central valley is important because it not only provides food to the nation, but it provides food to the world

Bobby Kahn – Executive Director Madera County Economic Development Commission

- State government is overly regulating business
- Enterprise Zones are an important tool to Madera
- Consider the regional marketing plan created by the Central California Economic Development Corporation
- The Labor and Work Force Development agency should continue to support CalBiz

Jackson Baker - President Madera Quarry

- Aggregates are extremely important because they are used to build almost everything
- Madera County transports aggregates from Coalinga and the San Joaquin River
 - This costs Madera builders about \$10,000 in transportation costs
- Madera should consider an aggregate site for their county
 - It will help bring housing cost down

Community Panel

Steve Mendt – Vice Mayor

- The Madera Compact is collaboration between business, education and government in the community
 - The goal is to increase communication between the entities and help encourage kids to stay in school and pursue higher education

Tim Curley Regional Vice President – Hospital Council of Northern and Central California

- Educate legislators that are doing harm to the central valley
- The partnership plan should be more proactive and focus on a few big goals
- Health care in the valley is an important issue and it should be a critical component
- Support SB 167 – this bill provides more time for hospitals in lower earthquake risk zones to retrofit their facilities
- Support SB A47 – this bill increases the amount of time part time community college faculty can teach
- Three priorities for health care:
 - Medical Center at UC Merced
 - Nurse and education consortium
 - Reimbursement for Medi-Cal benefits

Chris White – General Manager of Central California Irrigation District

- Need more money to support water storage projects
- No more regulations on water quality

Madera County Work Board Investment

- Workforce demographics are changing: skilled labor is leaving and the ethnic workforce is growing
- Priorities for the workforce investment board: fully fund the workforce act and maintain autonomy for local workforce investment groups.

Social Services

- Need the opportunity to compete for job development and economic assistance
- Workforce development should specialize in education and language development
- Develop treatment center for methamphetamine addicts
- Develop a regional Valley plan for drug problems and not 8 separate county plans

Gary Savanda – Former Mayor Madera

- Madera's 3 priorities:
 - Education
 - Beautification
 - Diversification
- Education is the cornerstone of any well developed and qualified workforce
- Beautification is making the valley more beautiful
 - The Partnership should develop a regional beautification plan
- Diversification in employment is necessary
 - The valley should open up to jobs and industries that provide training and career paths